Recte Scribendi Ratio:

OR, A

Method of Writing Well;

BEING AN

INTRODUCTION

To the Beſt

FORMS of LETTERS,

With COPIES of the

Round Hand,

By *Ralph Morton* Writing-Maſter, oppoſite to the Tron-Church.

EDINBURGH,
Printed and ſold by the Author, and at the Coffee-Houſe.

Recta Scribendi Ratio.

IF the Antiquity of an *ART*, can advance its Credit and Reputation, this of the *PEN* may juſtly claim it: For, although we cannot find out its Original, yet we find the Civiliz'd of all Ages have given it a kind and obliging Reception. But, who thoſe Ingenious Perſons were that firſt Invented it, themſelves, and all other Authentick Authors, have left Succeſſion in Ignorance of; and conſequently their Memories have loſt thoſe due *Encomiums* their *Merits* have deſerved.

Some have aſcrib'd the finding out of *Letters* to *GOD* alone, having eſteemed it above the reach of Man: But, whether or no, I ſhall not enquire, much leſs have Capacity to determine. However, it is ſomewhat ſtrange, that *WRITING*, that's the Recorder of all other *Arts*, ſhould be ſo careleſs of Preſerving the Memory of its Author.

How much Time would it require, and how would it puzzle an Undertaker, to find out the *Inventer* of the ſeveral *Characters* uſed amongſt the civiliz'd Nations; Nay, if it were no more but to find out the Names of thoſe *Ingenious Men*, that contrived the *Alphabets* of our own Country, ſuch as *Court*, *Chancery* and *Text* Hand; or, indeed, any other Hand now in uſe amongſt us.

How wonderful alſo is it to conſider, how far this *Divine Bleſſing* extends it ſelf for the good of Mankind, and how much it is Diverſifi'd, in ſo much, that every *Nation*, *Language* and *People* in the World, that uſe it, have almoſt as differing a *Character*, and *Manner* of *Writing*, to expreſs their Thoughts, as well as a different Speech: And the Excellency

cellency of it is well *Demonſtrated*, by the miſerable *Barbarity* of thoſe Countries that have not the Happineſs of its Acquaintance.

And among all the curious *Inventions* of Humane *Societies*, the communicating *Conceptions*, by the *Complication* of *Letters*, is worthily Accounted the moſt *Ingenious*, moſt *Neceſſary*, and moſt *Admirable*, that an high flown *Fancy* in its greateſt *Sublimity* could have produc'd; both in reſpect of the *Excellency* of its *Contrivance*, and alſo for the *Extenſiveneſs* of its *Benefits*: For the Excellency of its Contrivance, it is almoſt a *Miracle*, that a *Mean* could be Invented, whereby *Words* and *Sounds*, which naturally are the Objects of the Ear, ſhould be the Objects of the Eye: No *Invention* ever yet, could make the *Object* of *Seeing*, the *Object* of *Hearing*; nor the *Object* of *Hearing*, the *Object* of *Smelling*; nor the *Object* of *Smelling*, the *Object* of *Feeling*; only the *Object* of *Hearing* by this Invention of *Letters*, is made (in ſome ſort) the *Object* of *Seeing*.

And as it is Excellent for its *Contrivance*, ſo it is no leſs for its *Benefits*: For, by *Writing* we have the Comfort of *GOD*'s *Holy Word* continued to us, which from *Writing* receiveth its *Denomination* in being called *Scripture*, which is nothing elſe but *Writing*: By this we have the *Monuments* of *Antient Times* communicated to us, and all good *Arts* and *Learning* delivered to Mankind.

By *Writing* we may give Direction to our *foreign Buſineſs*, though we ſtay at Home; and for our *Domeſtick*, though we ſtay Abroad.

By *Writing* we may Confer with an abſent *Friend*, as with a preſent *Neighbour*.

The *Rarities* of this *Art* were never yet ſo Common as to make them *Deſpicable*; for the World very ſeldom produc'd above one famous Maſter at a time: This Age brought forth a *Matorot*, that a *Velde*, and a third an *Ayres*; as if a particular ſprightly *Genius* was required, and they were to riſe from the *Phœnix* Aſhes of each other: Or, that Men were to be born *Pen-Men* as well as *Poets*.

Writing by the Learned is acknowledged for an *Art*, and by ſome who are reckoned *Writing-Maſters*, for a *Fancy*: I judge thoſe can ne-

ver

ver be thought by well grounded *Artists*, Master of that *Art* they deny the *Method* of; being fitly compar'd to a *Carpenter that Works without a Rule*.

And such pretending Masters are very numerous every where, having more *Confidence* than *Skill* and *Ingenuity*; and without *Modesty* or a *Blush*, impose upon the World such Stuff and Trash for regular *Writing*, that whether it is a greater Scandal to the Name of *Writing-Master*, or *Fair Writing*, I cannot determine.

But let them delight to Gild their baser *Mettle*, while *Gold* shines in its native *Lustre*, which will plainly discover such impotent *Pretenders*, who offer to Teach an *Art*, in which themselves had need to be Instructed; and to the Disgrace of the *Title*, lurk and shelter themselves under the Notion of *Writing-Masters*.

That which we perform our *Work* by, being the only *Rule* and *Measure* of our *Performances*, makes our *Work* either Good or Bad, according to the *Exactness* or *Imperfections* of those *Rules* they accord with. And if so, they cannot judge of this *Art*, that are Ignorant of the *Method*; for none can judge of the Whole, who are ignorant of a Part.

And every *Art* consisting of two *Parts*, *(viz.)* *Method* and *Practice*.

1st. *Of* Method *in a Compendious and certain Means of* Art, *delivered by* Rules, Precepts, *and* Institutions.

2dly. *Of* Practice, *in an* Exercise *and* Use *of the same*.

Now, *Writing* being the *Recording* in *legible Characters*, any *Proceedings* at *Law*, *Evidences* of *Lands*, *Book-Entries*, and *Epistles*, all the *Records* of *Courts*, and *Evidences* of *Lands*, ought to be wrote in a firm and substantial *Hand*; so that they may remain Legible for ever. For what is of perpetual Concern, requires a perpetual Duration. *Book-Entries*, as *Shop-Books*, and the like, being of lesser Duration, they ought to be wrote in a *Hand* of a lesser Substance: And as for *Letters*, these (requiring no longer Duration almost than their Reading,) cannot be written too small or faint, if Legible.

And

And as there is variety of *Buſineſs*, ſo there ought to be variety of *Hands*, ſome requiring a ſhorter and others a longer Continuance; ſo it is abſolutely neceſſary, that there be *Hands* alſo of a greater, and leſſer *Firmneſs*. And likeways the ſeveral Courts, *(viz.)* the Courts of *King's-Bench*, *Common-Pleas*, and *Chancery*, ſhould uſe diſtinct Characters for their *Records*; and the Records of Courts would become Illegible, if they did not maintain their Practice by their Character.

And as it is abſolutely requiſite to have ſeveral ſorts of *Hands* for ſeveral Uſes; ſo there may be a beſt of each ſort.

And now having ſpoke of the *Uſe* of *Writing* in General, with the Reaſon of *Firmneſs* or *Faintneſs*; I proceed to theſe three undeniable *Principles* of this *ART*, upon which all *Hands* depend, *(viz.)* *Firm*, *Faſt* and *Fair*, and on them conſiſts the whole Marrow of *Writing*; they being the *Baſis*, upon which the whole *Structure* is built.

1*ſt*. *Firmneſs* conſiſts in the fulneſs of *Strokes*: So that that *Hand* is moſt Firm and Durable, whoſe Characters are, in their ſeveral Differences, performed by the *Full* of the *Pen*.

2*dly*. *Expedition*, I ſay, that the leſſer Compaſs the Pen doth move in performing any Letter, that it's the more *Expeditious*; and that the taking of the Pen, in the making of any Letter, or in the joyning of Letters, makes the *Hand* the ſlower.

3*dly*. *Beauty*, which is the moſt conſiderable Part of *Penmanſhip*.

1*ſt*. Then let every Letter have its *Natural*, *Full* and *Small* (I mean by *Natural*, ſuch Strokes as are made at one Motion.)

2*dly*. That every *Letter* in a *Hand* ſtand alike.

3*dly*. That all the *Letters* without *Stems* be of one height and depth, provided the *Form* of the *Letters* will admit of it.

4*thly*. That every *Full* bear one Proportion of Fulneſs; and every ſmall *Stroke* be as Fine as poſſible.

5*thly*. That all *Letters* or Parts of *Letters* of one kind or name, do, in all their *Dimenſions*, remain the ſame.

6*thly*. That all the *Letters* or Parts of *Letters*, within the Ground or upper Line of thoſe *Hands* that depend upon the *Circle*, and *perpen-*

dicular

licular Line, be of the ſame breadth with their height; and then all heir *Whites* will be alike: Which will add much to the *Luſture* of an *Hand.*

7*thly.* That the *White* of the (O) be obſerved between Letter and Letter, and the double thereof between Word and Word.

Theſe three *Principles* being thus conſidered, give a certain *Method* f every *Hand.*

Advertiſement.

THE *Author hereof is* Engraving *a Large* Copy-Book *of all the Uſual* Hands *of* Great-Britain, *to Publiſh it with* Rules *grounded upon eſe three foreſaid* Principles, *which he hopes will anſwer all the excellent ualifications of* Hand-Writing.

And for Encouragement of ſuch as in the mean time ſhall apply themſelves his Inſtruction, may have theſe Rules *communicated to them; and that y do not demand an endleſs* Labour, *but are contained in a few eaſy* Docu-nts *of meet* Proportions, *which will preſent an open and ready Acceſs into moſt inward Secrets of this* Art.

And if any ſuſpect the Author cannot perform by Command *of* Hand, *at is contained in the following Pages, they may for their* Satisfaction *(if ſtand with their Conveniency) be convinced by* Ocular Demonſtration.

All the Clerks Hands, *with* Arithmetick, Vulgar *and* Decimal, Mer-nts Accompts, *are Taught by the* Author; *and for Expedition Youth be Boarded. Such as have neglected their Time, may be Taught privately the Author's Houſe, or at their own Habitations.*

BRITISH
8 NO 71
MUSEUM

Coxton's
Round Hand

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Penna Sculpturam vincit
Corrected stroakes by Sturt from scribling Quill
Do shew the Gravers not the Penmans skill
For Lines exactly grav'd but faintly show
The bold command from Artists Pen that flow
Merton

BRITISH
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MUSEUM

BRITISH
8 NO 71
MUSEUM

A good Conscience is a continuall comfort

A

Be constant in some commendable Employm^t

B

Continue to improve every moment of time

C

Divine love is a never failing Treasure

D

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E

Envious men become their own Tormenters

E

F

Faith is the foundation of a Christian life

F

G

Good Counsel without Execution is of no effect

G

H

He y would be something must do something

H

BRITISH
8 AO 71
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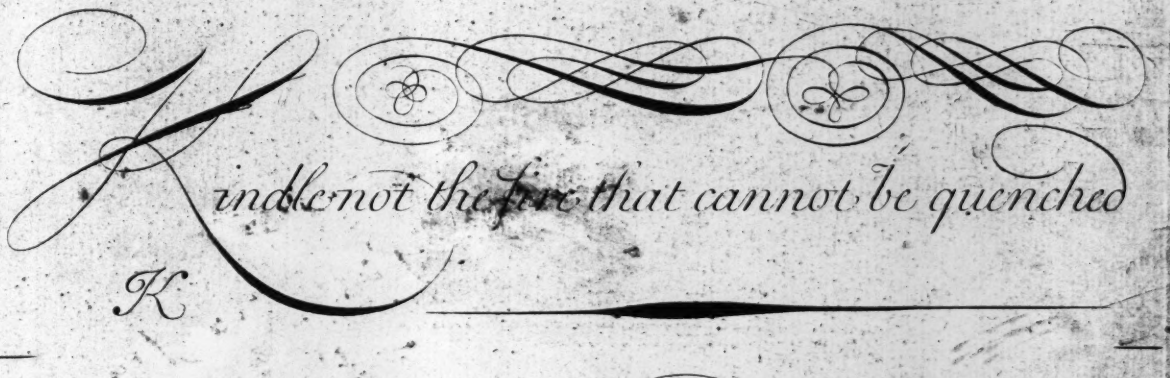
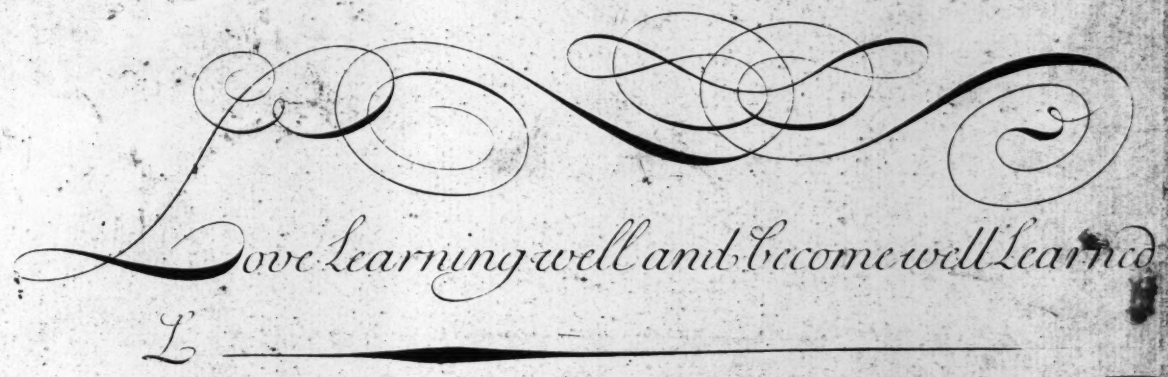
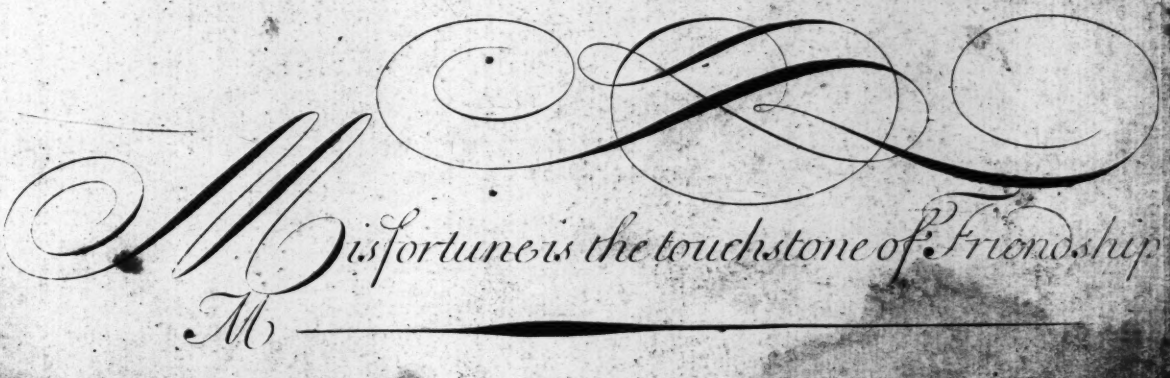
Industrious performances seldom fail
J


Kindle not the fire that cannot be quenched
K


Love Learning well and become well Learned
L


Misfortune is the touchstone of Friendship
M

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MUSEUM

Nothing is impossible to a willing mind

Morton

Our pleasures are inductions to our griefe

Prosperity getteth friends. Adversity tries them

Quiet minds commonly enjoy much

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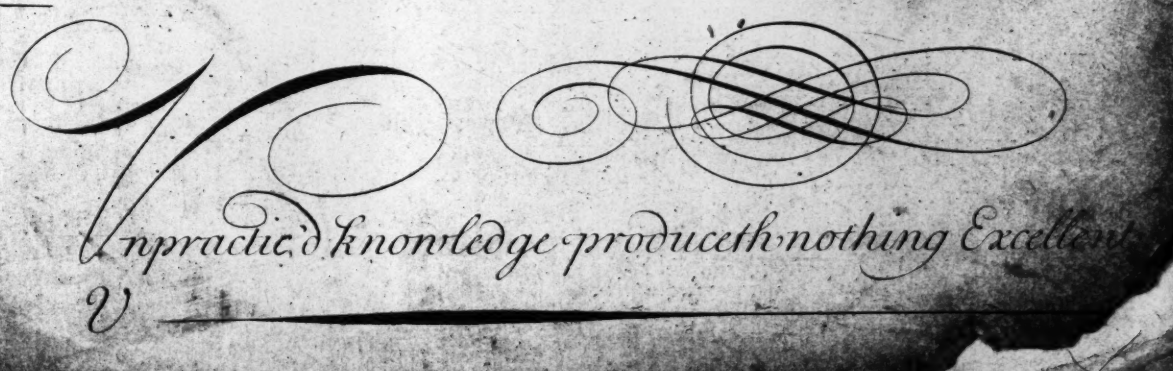
Rewards & punishments keep Governmt in order

Success seldome fails to crown Industry

The praises of the Envi'd are y torm^ts of y^e Envious


Unpractic'd knowledge produceth nothing Excellent

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Whatsoever is beyond a Competency is a snare
W

X thousand ways God can inflict punishment
X

Youth are extravagant in squandering time
Y

Zeno was the founder of Stoick Philosophy
Z

BRITISH
3 NO 71
MUSEUM